

# Children eat poison spray blackberries

**EIGHT children were in hospital last night after eating blackberries sprayed with weed killer.**

Parents protested after they found that the bushes had been sprayed.

Engineering boss John Machent treated the blackberry bushes and weeds on land near his works at Morven Street, Cresswell, Nottinghamshire.

Mr Machent used the paraquat-based weed-killer—

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gramoxone — to spray the bushes. He mixed 2lb. of powder with 20 gallons of water to spray the land.

Then the children came along and ate the fruit.

Mr Machent spotted them picking berries on land next to his plot. He warned them not to take any from his land.

But he was too late, they had already eaten the fruit.

Ten-year-old Angela Lithgow and her brother Steven, six, had swallowed the most

They ran to their home near the works and told their mother, Mrs Bernice Lithgow, about the poisoned berries.

Within minutes they were on their way to hospital. After a police loudspeaker warning 27 other children joined them in Kilton Hospital, Worksop.

## Ridiculous

But only eight were found to have eaten the poisoned berries. Last night their condition was satisfactory.

Mrs Lithgow said: 'It is ridiculous spraying a blackberry bush when it is known that children regularly pick

the berries. If he was forced to use the spray then he should have put up a notice so parents could warn their children to keep away. I have already been to tell him how dangerous his action was.'

Police ordered Mr Machent to burn down the bushes to stop more berries being eaten.

Mr Machent said: 'I didn't even know there were any ripe berries on the bushes. I spray the land every year to keep the weeds down.'

'It wasn't until I saw the children picking berries nearby that I realised they could have eaten some from the bushes which had been sprayed.'

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